

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU ST. IRISH MILITARY 1913-21
I.C. W.S. 788

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 788.

Witness

Sean (Bertie) Scully, *NT*,
'Dun Muire',
Glenbeigh,
Co. Kerry.

Identity.

Q.M. Killorglin Batt'n. Kerry Brigade;
V/O.C. 6th (Killorglin) Batt'n.
Kerry II Brigade.

Subject.

- (a) Irish Volunteers, Co. Kerry, 1914-1921;
- (b) Republican Courts, Co. Kerry, 1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT

SEÁN (BERTIE) SCULLY, N.T.,
GLENCAR, CO. KERRY, NOW 'DUN MUIRE', GLENBEIGH,
CO. KERRY.

V/O.C., 6TH (KILLORGLIN) BATTALION, KERRY 11 BRIGADE.

I was at a loose end for two years after leaving the National School and then tried the King's Scholarship examination in 1914 with a view to training to be a National Teacher. My father was a National Teacher; also my brother Liam, who had got a job in Tralee, Strand Street National School. I was then 18 years, being born into the world on 8th April, 1896.

1914.

During Easter Week, 1914, I sat for this examination in Killarney and was introduced to a "National" Volunteer drilling parade at the old Temperance Hall. The instructor was an ex-soldier, Magennis, I think, who had been a postman in Glencar, and I knew him.

1916.

While in training at De La Salle, Waterford, we took part with much gusto in Redmondite Volunteer parades. The atmosphere was very much pro-British previous to Easter Week and we all sang "It's a long way to Tipperary" and the other catchy refrains. We were very green.

1915-16.

I sensed a different atmosphere in Tralee, where I used to go sometimes during the holidays. I have still a vivid impression of Austin Stack, R.I.P., to whom I was

introduced by my brother Liam, R.I.P. I attended parades at the Rink, and I sensed a great deal of bitterness during the Split in the Volunteers resulting from Redmond's (and in Kerry Tom O'Donnell's) recruiting speeches. After Easter Week a subtle change in atmosphere crept into the Training College also. I regretted a row I had with a great friend of mine there, O'Connell was his name, who had a brother an Officer in France. It passed off and we again became good friends, however.

Easter Week.

It was, I think, on Holy Thursday night my brother Liam came home from Tralee. It may have been the following night. He left for Caherciveen the next day, cycling through Ballaghosheen. I went a little way with him. He gave me a .38 revolver and 40 rounds of ammunition to keep for him. I understood he was the bearer of a message to someone in Caherciveen about the Rising. He returned home from Caherciveen on the following morning. I don't know whether or not he went anywhere besides Caherciveen while he was absent from home during the twenty four hours. He left again (for Tralee, I think) on Saturday, saying he was going to Dublin to play a football match with the Kerry team. I wanted to go too as I guessed what was up, but he vetoed it. I think he gave me to understand that he might not return. I think he went as far as Thurles by train and got no further. I went back to Waterford and finished training as a National Teacher in June.

Re-organisation after 1916.

The first meeting in Glencar called by Liam was held at the "White Gate", Glencar, formerly Miss Taylor's Post Office. She was sister of Joe's, killed 1920 and Jim's, killed 1923. It is now occupied by her sister, Mrs. Maura McGrath, whose husband is brother of the late Seán McGrath (London). About nine or ten repeated a declaration (not oath) of Secrecy and Loyalty to the Irish Volunteers: Liam, Joe Taylor, (decd.), his brother Jim, (decd.) Jim Taylor, "The Captain", (decd.), Bealalaw, Bill Taylor, Paddy Shea (who afterwards dropped out), my other brother Chris, Michael Taylor (decd.) and a few others whom I cannot remember. Liam was teaching in Glencar at the time. I started to teach in his place while he did a University Course. We went to Caherdaniel Irish College that year. Albina Broderick had several of the 1916 men recuperating there (either that year or 1917, I cannot be sure which year - we were there both years). Donnadh Ó Loinsig, Padraig ó Sé (Padraig na léime) were in charge of the College, a very advanced and enthusiastic gathering as regards language revival and national sentiment.

1917.

I was left in charge of the local Section, taking up assistantship permanently in Liam's place. We got down to organising a Company and soon had three Sections; No. 1 Jim Taylor, "The Captain", and Chris Scully, Glencar Main Section; No. 2, Bunglash, Dan Sullivan and Paddy (Ginger) Shea; No. 3 "Top of the Glen" Section, John Murphy and Jerry Foley, Boherhill. We started to get up funds for

uniform caps and equipment. I got drill books and Joe Taylor became very proficient as Drill Master. I did not fall in on public parades in daytime fearing R.I.C. records on my activities and reports to the Department of Education. Joe Taylor automatically became Company O.C. on formation of the Battalion, Chris. Scully and Dan Sullivan 1st and 2nd Lieutenants.

I used our H.Q. at White Gate to organise and train a pipers' band. In 1920 the band was attacked one night. I was singled out and beaten up with revolver butts and my set of pipes confiscated. The others escaped.

We had been organising at a steady rate and began to be noticed by the R.I.C., Sergeant Moran and about four or five others, afterwards increased to seven.

Organisation of Battalion.

I had been in touch with "Floss" Doherty all this time. He was teaching in Killorglin, after having taken part in the 1916 Rising in Dublin. At the end of 1917, I think, we arranged a first meeting in the Temperance Hall, Killorglin. I went down (Glencar), Tom O'Connor (Milltown), one other man from Milltown. I think one from Cullinafercy. Jack Langford and Batt Dwyer represented Killorglin, as well as a few others. "Floss" Doherty stated he was told off by H.Q. to take over the Battalion and gave the area as Milltown, Cullinafercy, Killorglin, Glencar, Glenbeigh and Kilgobnet. The Battalion Staff appointed at that meeting were - F. Doherty, O.C; Tom O'Connor, Vice O.C.; Seán Scully, Q.M. As to the Adjutant, this latter I cannot now place, probably one of the Killorglin men or Dan Mulvihill,

if he were there. The Company O.Cs recognised then were - Glencar Joe Taylor, R.I.P.; Killorglin, Jack Langford; Milltown, Anthony Barrett (he wore a moustache); Glenbeigh (soon afterwards when organised) Frank Grady. Jack Langford died some time afterwards. Some time afterwards Kilbognet O.C., Tim Sullivan, also Dungeel O.C., Mick Scully, R.I.P. (then working at McCrohan's) were both added. (This set up of Battalion held, with few variations, until "Floss" Doherty had to leave the district after the "Hillville" ambush in November, 1920, I think.) The Battalion Staff then were - Tom O'Connor, O.C.; Seán Scully, Vice O.C. It was arranged that I would be responsible for organising Glencar, Glenbeigh and other Companies west of the Laune River; as the Laune split the Battalion and also Tom O'Connor spent much of his time east of the Laune in touch with Paddy Cahill's Brigade H.Q. at Keel. Paddy (Rua) Sullivan was Q.M. and Dan Mulvihill was Adjutant. This Staff held until the Truce or shortly before it when Dick Langford took Dan Mulvihill's place on the latter's transfer to the 1st Southern Division. Two Companies were added, I think, before the Truce. 1. Keel, O.C. Brian O'Brien, I think. 2. Caragh Lake, Mick Ahern O.C. and ___Murphy, Lieutenant.

St. Patrick's Day Parade, 1918. I think this was the year Floss Doherty called for a parade in Killorglin and about 80 of the Glencar Company marched the ten or twelve miles to it. Most had some kind of equipment, bandoliers, haversacks, I.V. caps, etc., and Joe Taylor gave a pretty good display as drill instructor in the Square with a perfectly trained Company. All other Companies took part.

Sinn Fein.

All this time the Sinn Fein Club, also started in 1917, was organising. Chris. Scully, my young brother, was Secretary, with Jim Taylor, "The Captain", as he was called, Treasurer. All Volunteers and many of the older ex-Land League veterans, such as Joseph Taylor, Senior, and Mike Jones, Keass, as Chair and Vice Chairman, belonged to the Club.

1918. and Conscription Scare. Even before this, the tempo in Glencar had been increasing. The social position of the R.I.C. had been deteriorating but still their influence held many, some through fear, aloof from the national revival. The presence of two Curates from 1916 to 1921 had a very encouraging trend in our favour, i.e., Fr. John Lynch, C.C., brother of Fionan's, a regular fire-eater and rabid anti-Britisher, and during and after the Conscription Scare, Fr. Murphy, C.C. (R.I.P.), brother-in-law of Seán Moylan's, a level headed, sound man of exceptional ability, who, I believe, escaped in the 'Titanic' disaster. He became Trustee of the Conscription fund and, I believe, President of Sinn Fein in the district, also later, I think, President of the Republican Court. The Conscription fund reached, I think, about £100 and the Volunteer Company increased to over 100. I think the figure pre-Truce would be almost 120, perhaps the largest outside the big towns in Kerry.

Cumann na mBan were also organised at this time. Dr. Joe Prendeville came and gave regular lessons in First

Aid. Cumann na mBan remained very active all along up to the Truce and were very helpful.

When the Conscription Scare eased off, many of the ex-diehard subscribers, feeling again secure, decided to ask for their subscriptions back. This created a great deal of controversy as a big section thought the funds should be given to Volunteers to be used for arms, etc. The end was that each subscriber was paid back his subscription at one end of a table in the small library in the Chapel Yard and at the other end two or three Volunteer Officers took subscriptions on the spot for Volunteer purposes. Some of this money had already been ear marked for pikes, medical supplies, first aid outfits, tinned food, etc. The Volunteers received back nearly half of the total Conscription fund to pay for these and have a surplus. Three dozen pikes were made for us by Flynn, the blacksmith in Killorglin. I think they cost us a few shillings each. The Company became very proficient in pike drill and bayonet practice.

Arrests for Drilling.

After St. Patrick's Day Parade, the R.I.C. seemed to have selected leaders for special attention. Our house was raided some time this year. My brother Chris. was arrested and conveyed to Barracks, also the O.C., Joe Taylor; they were tried in Killarney and received six months' imprisonment for illegal drilling. Dan Sullivan, 1st Lieutenant of the organised Company, was also sentenced. They all served in Belfast Jail with Stack, Lynch, etc.

About this time we took in a Canadian soldier home on leave from a Camp on Salisbury Plain, whom I persuaded to desert. He was Jim Foley, who proved an invaluable training officer and who took over the Company with Jim Taylor, Bealalaw ("The Captain") for training purposes and acted as Company O.C. for a period.

Ammunition.

We had been adding to our supply of guns, mostly shot guns, with a few revolvers. Wherever guns were not available for the asking, we raided and took them. We raided Lickeen House and other places. I took two men one night, on information given me from a friendly source, and raked in 800 rounds B.B. No. 1 and No. 2 shot gun cartridges in fair condition. The exact details of this raid cannot yet be divulged as the persons concerned asked for my word on the question and I haven't been released. These supplied the whole Brigade with stuff later on when required and some of it was used in such places as the Rathmore ambush, etc. etc. The removal of this ammunition was never reported to the R.I.C. A few mornings afterwards my house was raided again by R.I.C. I had all the stuff in a box near my bed, with a cloth and candlestick on it for reading, when they came into the room. One of them said, "We must search the house". I said, "search away" and turned my back on the box, put my foot on the window sill and was tying my laces. They looked around everywhere half-heartedly, ignoring the box, and soon after left the house. I think if I had "looked" at the box they would have noticed. I think one of the two that came into

the room was killed afterwards in the Rathmore ambush, perhaps by one of these cartridges, who knows ! Many of them, driven by circumstances into a situation unforeseen, did not deserve the deaths they got. Neither were we "hard men" nor "gun men" nor "killers", as our reputation built itself up under the circumstances. Very few of us would relish the idea of depriving a human being of his life.

Meeting in Caherciveen.

I cannot remember whether it was before the arrests or after their release, Joe Taylor and I went to a meeting in Caherciveen to meet Dick Mulcahy. In fact, I can't place this meeting in time at all as it may have been much later (end of 1919 or early in 1920) but the date can be verified. It was in any case after the order had come to us to "get arms when and where you can", as I remember querying Mulcahy on this order. "Would we be justified", I think I said, "if we saw a patrol armed coming along to take their arms even if we had to kill them in the attack ?" I remember that he only smiled. I think Jerry O'Connell, Jeremiah Riordan, Denis Daly and Diarmuid O'Connell, etc., were there; also Floss Doherty was with Mulcahy.

Republican Courts.

Even before the R.I.C. left, Republican Courts were functioning in Glencar under my personal supervision. Judges, I think, were Fr. Murphy, C.C., Mike Jones, Keass, Jim Taylor (The Captain). Many cases were held and decisions carried out by Republican Police, Jack Sullivan,

White Gate, Mick Sullivan, Cosha, and some others, assisted by Irish Volunteers, if necessary. Decisions were duly enforced. Some found it hard to believe we would enforce them but found out differently. A few developed grudges but got over it. Examples: 1. M.B. summoned J.F. for amount of grazing due. Decree given. J.F. declined to pay but Irish Volunteers called and took away his new bike until he paid, which he did immediately. Fines for assault, trespass, rights of way defined, etc., etc. 2. M.C. was summoned and decreed or fined, I cannot remember for what, but dodged paying up by not being at home when Irish Republican Police called at a reasonable hour. They decided to call later and did so about 12 o'clock knowing he would be in definitely. They knocked and were admitted by his wife in her night dress. He did not appear in the kitchen. A candle was lighting there and when they asked where Denny was she told them that she didn't know where he was and then became very reproachful, telling them that they were decent boys (one of them was from the townland and, of course, she knew both) and if they knew her condition they wouldn't be disturbing her this hour of the night. They left hurriedly "taking the door off each other" and the fine was, I think, never paid. She and Denny got the best of them and as one of them remarked "The part that riled us altogether was that Denny was lying above in bed, not a word out of him and taking it all in".

Some Clashes with Outlying Units.

A man from Blackwater (Dereendaragh) sold a heifer to P.B. in Glencar. His brother came along with a Section of the local Unit, led by its O.C., O'Neill, and took away the heifer from Breen, saying the brother had no right to sell the heifer. I sent a note to them to return either the heifer or the money but nothing came of it. Finally, after several exchange of notes, we got fed up and five or six of us went out there across Balloghosheen several miles and visited the man who took the heifer. He wouldn't budge and we drove the best heifer we could find on his land back to Glencar and handed her over to P.B. The man followed next day and while we stood by he fixed up with P.B. and we warned the outside unit not to encroach on our "area" again without notifying us first.

In 1920 or late 1919 a deserter, Casey, came across from Masterguihy with a rifle. He was an ex-British Army man and had joined the Caheriveen or Waterville A.S.U. We took his rifle. He said he wanted to join our column. A message came from M. Walsh, Knopogue, that we were to hold him, as he and two others were implicated in a Post Office raid. They sent one other named Fitzgerald and asked us to hold them both until they were tried, saying they would pay for their keep and for a guard. They asked for the rifle to be returned, but I would not give it until we would see further about it and told them they should have minded it better while they had it.

The prisoners were held too long and we saw no chance of their being taken off our hands. Things were getting

too hot and we had to let them go. They had admitted it, however, but claimed a lot of extenuating circumstances. The Kerry 111 Brigade refused afterwards to pay the bill we sent them, having the excuse that we held on illegally to the rifle.

J.C., a decent shopkeeper, unwittingly ordered a consignment of Clarke's tobacco, not knowing it had been black listed. His cart was raided at Beaufort and the tobacco seized. After several visits and exchange of despatches, I succeeded in getting the tobacco returned to him.

Brigade Meetings.

I had little contact until 1920 with Brigade and left that to Tom O'Connor mostly even then. I remember attending one at the old Town Hall in Tralee just before it was burned. This must have been in November, 1920. I was talking to one of the North Kerry chaps near the Hall before the meeting. He was killed the following May - Lyons was his name. I think Con Dee escaped at the same time, though two others - Dalton and Walsh - were captured and killed along with Lyons. Cahill was very uneasy all the time, expecting a raid from the Barracks which was at a slant across the street almost. He questioned me on list of armament, ammunition, etc., in our Battalion. I think a General Order came for the same day and the Hall was burned after several shootings in the area. It was at this meeting he ordered me to burn Wynn's Castle, Glenbeigh, to prevent it being occupied by military.

Meeting at Rae's, Keel.

Eamon Price from G.H.Q. attended. Tom O'Connor and myself attended. This must have been moving on to near the Truce in 1921. Price queried on operations past and to come. Castlemaine ambush had come off before that.

Meeting at Camp and Change of Brigade O.Cs.

Paddy Cahill was Brigade O.C., _____ Barry, Adjutant; Joe Melinn had some rank in it. He was sent to Mallow to the Divisional meetings by Cahill. Liam Lynch was supposed to resent Cahill not turning up personally and not sending regular reports to Division. Tom O'Connor and myself left Glencar in the evening some date in 1921, I think. We cycled to Cromane, crossed by boat and went over the hill to Camp. The meeting was a big one. "Free" Murphy came with Liam Lynch. Cahill sat taking little part, smoking a pipe all the time. We were told the changes in O.Cs. "Free" to be Kerry 1 O.C. and J.J. Rice to be O.C. Kerry 11. Jeremiah O'Riordan, O.C. Kerry 111 Brigade, was there and I found out, or it was announced by Liam Lynch, that Glencar and Glenbeigh would be transferred to Kerry 111 and the remainder of the 6th Battalion to Kerry 11. I mightn't have said anything but for this proposed change. I felt that it was no time for new experiments in organisation and thought that Cahill was making a good job of things. I then asked mildly what were the reasons as to why Cahill was deposed. Liam Lynch got very angry at my query and snapped, "It is an order". We left the meeting, went round to Keel and stayed during the day at Miss Corcoran's, N.T., Tom O'Connor's Aunt,

and cycled around Killorglin the following night, crossing the Laune to Glencar, cycling with one hand and a revolver in the other. I sent in my resignation as Battalion Vice O.C. on the spot, objecting to the break up of the Battalion. I was told afterwards that Liam Lynch said he regretted the incident, ordered that my resignation be not accepted and left the Battalion intact under Kerry II.

May 29th, 1920.

I attended a parade at Bealalaw Bridge of No. 3 Section of the Glencar Company, I think, and came home about 1 o'clock. It was bright moonlight but the house was lit up. I hid near the house, expecting a raid, but Chris. was watching out for me and called me. I went in. Seán Forde, Paddy Keneally and another chap were inside. When they told me Liam had been killed the night before in the Kilmallock Barrack attack I don't think it surprised me. He had been home shortly before on a request from me. I had gone to Limerick from Adare after attending Kennedy's funeral at Annascaul and left a message for him to come home as he had been reported locally as being dead. He did so and left us, I could see, and for the last time, urgently, the morning before Ballylanders Barracks were attacked. When I took up teaching in his place in Glencar, he, after doing a University Course, decided to give up National School teaching. He had Certificates from the Royal Society of Arts also. Up to his death, from that time he devoted his whole life to Gaelic League organization and Volunteer work. He took up an appointment as Gaelic League organizer

in North Kerry first and Paddy Cahill told me afterwards that he appointed him a Battalion O.C. in North Kerry (Kerry 1 Brigade) when I was tracing his rank in the Volunteers.

Many of the helpers and a few of the County Gaelic League big shots were not Volunteers and did not wish that Gaelic League work be carried on and intermingled with Volunteer organization, on the plea that the Gaelic League was "non political". For this reason he did not pull with some of them. He travelled around and helped the "Kerry Feis Troupe" in organising concerts. Finally, Sceilg got him appointed as Gaelic League organiser for Limerick County, knowing and sympathising with his position. There he threw himself into the Volunteer movement more than ever. He, like Paddy Cahill, would be a protégé of Austin Stack's. A very promising career was cut short. From accounts I have received, the attack was delayed, preparations long drawn out and dawn had come before the issue was finally decided. A few R.I.C., including Sergeant Sullivan, escaped out of the back into a small concrete annexe and could not be dislodged as the supply of bombs had given out. Liam was very anxious to evacuate all of the Volunteers and exposed himself several times crossing the street. He was seen from the back of the Barracks and shot under the ear, dying without recovering consciousness.

Sergeant Sullivan was promoted to D.I. and sent to North Kerry. One of the first things he did was to bring a party of Tans to Ballylongford and burn out the Collins family, creamery business, completely, where Liam stayed while

in North Kerry.

He was shot dead in the street of Listowel by North Kerry Volunteers under Con Brosnan.

Seán Forde said they had come for me to attend the funeral. As they meant to keep his death secret, they proposed to bury him in West Limerick, he said. His family consented. I went with them. He was laid out in a farmer's house and they were making the coffin when I arrived in the early morning. It was the first time I saw a shooting casualty. Seán Finn, O.C. West Limerick, was there and, I remember, Paddy Clancy. These were killed afterwards. At the funeral that night we travelled round about to Templeglantine. Fr. Dick McCarthy, Father Wall (I think) and Father Kelly and about 50 riflemen were there. "Seán Forde" addressed the riflemen afterwards on the importance of caring for rifles and not getting them captured. Many of the men were West Limerick Brigade. The rifles had been lent them by East Limerick Column for the funeral. I stayed at Ballyhahill until the following night (Sunday) and was sent home by car. They gave me a flag and contents of his wallet, which included a bloodstained rough plan of the Barracks and its surroundings, apparently drawn by him in preparation for the attack. I think it was T. Crowley of East Limerick who afterwards said that "only for him the Barracks would never have been destroyed". This gave me to understand that he had a good deal to do with the planning. I paid a brief visit to Kilmallock district afterwards. I called to Seán Hogan's. The Tans had made an attempt to burn his house the night before. It was considered unsafe

for me to stay. I was sent out by trap to Willie Purcell's, where I met Seán Wall, Brigade O.C. We stayed in a dug-out in a double fence on Purcell's land. Purcell's wife, née Nora Sheehy (R.I.P.) acted as Secretary for Liam. Reports came in while I was there of operations carried out by Donchadh Hannigan, East Limerick Brigade Column O.C., which Seán handed me to read. I offered to stay with the East Limerick Column but he laughed and said, "We don't want the second one of ye to get killed here". He was soon afterwards killed himself and when I saw the item on the papers I regretted I hadn't stayed with him somehow. The night before I left I was taken to Mick Ryan's house at Thomastown. Staying there also were Seán O'Brien, I think his name was, and Mick Scanlon, another De La Salle teacher, of Galbally. When I said goodbye to Mick in the morning he remarked smilingly, "They'll (the Tans) never take me alive into a barracks". So they didn't, as I saw soon afterwards he jumped handcuffed from a lorry and was shot in a basement area in Limerick by them.

Operations at Home.

It was after this in July, 1920, I had first experience under fire. The R.I.C. had been reinforced and sent out patrols regularly. First we planned to capture a lorry bringing supplies to Glencar Barracks. I brought about a dozen Volunteers together to Breanlee, East of Coose Lake, and had a local man or two with us - J. Doona and P. Dwyer. We hid all day. A lorry came within a half mile of us but turned back. We heard afterwards that it had gone astray on its way to Glenbeigh Barracks with supplies. Once we

had started we decided to try the first thing that turned up. A patrol went round a three mile ring from the Barracks on certain evenings. We decided to ambush it. I had nine men: Self, Joe Taylor, Bill Taylor, Jim Taylor ("The Captain"), Dan Sullivan, Pat Griffin, Jim Foley, Jack Doona and, I think, Mick Sullivan, Cosha. Jim Foley had a rifle, some had shotguns, I had a small .22 revolver and two others had two small sporting rifles. Four R.I.C. came along. I ordered my men not to fire to kill. We had an idea of taking them without having to fire and then dressing up in their uniforms and taking the Barracks as it would be after dusk when they would be expected back. An old age pensioner in a donkey cart came along at the psychological moment and was between the files giving them talk. It was a low fence with a few furze bushes and when we stood up we were quite visible. One of them immediately lifted a gun to fire. I fired two rounds of ammunition at his side and shoulder. I then saw another raising his shotgun. I knew he was starting to aim at me and watched him in the split second. Two explosions came together, one blinding me but apparently going over my head. The R.I.C. man threw away the gun and threw himself on the road. One of the chaps had shot at his hands just as he pulled the trigger. There were pellets on the stock. The leader, I think a Sergeant, had run off. He had a Webley revolver and escaped with it. We had only one R.I.C. carbine in the whole capture, the rest were single shotguns. We took the two wounded men into the field and looked at their wounds. They weren't serious. This was a mistake. I believe they identified us, even though we were masked. Jim Foley could have brought down the escapee with rifle fire but reminded^{me} of the order not to fire to kill

However, I don't think I ever regretted the fact that we did not kill. I wore a pair of buttoned boots and I'm sure the wounded man, Cooney, recognised me. This was about the end of July. It was about a month afterwards one morning we heard they were evacuating. We had been sleeping in a hut in the woods at this time. Soon afterwards we built a better one.

I rowed down the lake to Caragh Station that day, leaving word for the lads to meet me at Bill Taylor's, near the scene of the ambush. Bill was the Company Q.M. We had already fixed on burning the Barracks immediately they left. P. Cahill had warned us of booby traps and hidden mines so I told them not to go near it until I came back. They, the R.I.C., evacuated the Barracks but the last lorry got broken down at Coose Lake about four miles from the Barracks. It was afterwards found to be a fake breakdown. They returned with the Tans that night and hid around the Barracks waiting for us. We didn't come and they went at about 1 o'clock to Bill Taylor's house to burn it.

I arrived at the house about 1 o'clock and found the lads inside, about nine of the local Section, including my brother Chris. who had got into bed. The rest were in the kitchen cleaning guns, joking and laughing (at the idea of burning the Barracks). I walked in and played hell. I told them the Tans could have walked in just as well. I demanded why they hadn't a sentry on the road at the end of the Bohereen. I put out Bill's brother, Mick. After a few minutes he came back saying there were people coming along the road. Somebody said that there was a fair next day and that would be people going to the fair. I ordered

them all out in any case. I was standing in the yard waiting for the last man out, my brother, when I saw the figures come up in front of the house. Someone said out of the darkness, "That's him, fire", and a volley rang out. I followed the lads around to the gable of the house and realised we were almost surrounded. We had left Bill's father, a cripple, his mother and a little girl, Peggie Moriarty, a niece of 6 years, inside in bed. I think, as it turned out, they, the R.I.C., got a bigger surprise than we did. All was confusion and firing indiscriminate. We moved back in the darkness and down to the river. We crossed it on the high ground. After awhile we saw a light and thought they had a light searching, such as a flash lamp. We did not realise for a long time that they had gone and left the thatch on fire. We then came back. It was dawn and we found the roof falling in. They had riddled the windows with bullets. The old man and the others had flung themselves under the windows, as they had been told to do by Bill previously in case of such a thing happening. This was the first house burned (in Kerry anyway) and was a new departure for the Tans. The local R.I.C. had known Bill was at the ambush and nearly recaptured all their stuff again and the whole lot of the ambush party except a few. We heard afterwards one at least of them was wounded, whether by our fire or their own we never knew.

We stayed there all the morning, got Volunteers, and started to clear the house and rebuild it. The Tans were supposed to be around Gortmaloon and Coose Lake so we took all precautions, scouts, etc., and held up everything passing. I held up a car at about 10 o'clock and discovered in it Seamus Fenton, the School Inspector. He knew me at once.

I waved him on as I knew he was on his way to the School, where I was supposed to be. He mentions this incident in his book "All This Happened". He did not report it to the Commissioners. What I usually did was to go to the School occasionally. The Principal, Mr. Donal O'Connor, was friendly - All his brothers were Volunteers - and nobody seemed to notice or care.

That night we carefully reconnoitred the Barracks and at dawn it was burning fiercely.

Those operations left us an area of 15 or 20 miles by 10 miles, nearly 200 square miles, free of the enemy and still not free. The R.I.C. who knew Glencar were kept in the Barracks in Killorglin. Afterwards when several from Killorglin town went up to Glencar "on the run", Paddy Sullivan, B. Dwyer, Martin Wade, Seamus Reilly, etc., a great deal of intercourse between their friends and Glencar inhabitants happened; besides, Killorglin was the market town and fair for all that district and I had an uncanny feeling all along that the R.I.C. were being supplied with a lot of useful information obtained either directly or surreptitiously, talk in pubs, questions here and there, etc., etc.

An Auxiliary or Tan, McCaughey, was sent to take charge of Killorglin Barracks. He took out a patrol almost every night of 14 or 15 Tans and R.I.C. generally to Castlemaine and back. Tom Connor sent word to me, that they meant to ambush them on a Saturday night. This was after the Hillville ambush, near Killorglin, and in which two Black and Tans were shot. It was in November, 1920. Cahill had left Tralee and had his Column at Keel in huts.

We had huts in Glencar which became the H.Q. for the Battalion. Floss Doherty had left and Tom O'Connor, Dan Mulvihill, Jim Cronin, J. Flynn, etc., were back and forth between the two Column bases.. I left on Friday night with ten or eleven men, I think, those in the previous ambush in Glencar with me and a few others. It was moonlight. We marched about fourteen miles to Knockreach, a small hill near Milltown, crossing the Laune by means of a horse and cart at the ford near Dungeel. We had a sleep during the day in a disused house on beds of hay. The C.C. from Milltown came out to hear our Confessions. After dusk we moved in nearer Killorglin and met Cahill's men, fixed our ambush position and got ready. There was a lot of confusion at first as Cahill wasn't there himself and Tom Connor was told off by him to take charge. One or two false alarms came on. I asked several times if scouts were in position in the town and was told they were. Finally, nothing came. The time of the patrol's passing had gone by long before. We gave it up and marched back the same way in the moonlight to Glencar. At about 2 o'clock we crossed the Laune and went cross country then.

We were quite unaware of what had happened. I blamed the scouting that night. When the patrol came out of the Barracks on the Square, McCaughey gave them right turn instead of left out Langford Street and up to Glencar by the Devil's Elbow. They were there before us in the morning, dressed in civilian clothes such as we wore, excepting the Tans, who were in their regular outfit with caps. They were guided by the R.I.C. who had left Glencar, including Cooney who had been wounded in the ambush. They went

straight to Lickeen House, which was empty, as they had information some of the Killorglin men on the run stayed there. They searched it and then went up a path through the wood and came to where we had the first hut while they were in Glencar, also on information. They went on to the Hotel, then up to the White Gate at dawn and on towards Bill Taylor's house, a Section of them, including Cooney, making for Joe Taylor's house near the White Gate. The first Section met three lads, including Chris, my brother, on the look out for us, and they, mistaking them for us, walked right on top of them and were captured.

Just before the police reached Joe Taylor's house Joe had arrived, placed his gun behind a fence, came in and put a bag of ammunition on the table. His sister got up and made down the fire. He was dozing near the fire when the police rushed in and caught him. They were so excited they did not notice the bag of ammunition. They rushed him out and back to the main party who had captured the other three. Apparently one of the Tans fired at him and shot him in the groin. They released two and took Chris along as a hostage with them. One of the R.I.C. tried to stop the bleeding, but Joe died in about an hour. I had parted with Joe, Bill, etc., near Coose Lake, going across the hill to my own home. I jumped into bed and must have been asleep for five or ten minutes when the shot woke me. I jumped up, dressed and ran out to where I had hidden the rifle. Soon I saw the column of Tans passing up the road towards Coose Lake. My house was on a hill above them and hard to get at. When they passed I went back the road

and heard what had happened. They had sent for a priest and doctor for Joe but he was dying when I reached him. He did, I think, recognise me and muttered "Give me the orders and I'll carry them out". He had been taken into a house near where he was shot and lay on a "settle-bed" or long wooden divan in the kitchen.

The words he used reminded me of an incident the night before. In the confusion of a false rumour that the Tans were coming, I saw that there was a great deal of danger. I picked out my own men, put them in charge of Joe and told him off to the Eastern end of the field and gave him instructions as to when and how his men would open fire. I tried to find the O.C. then and, in the meantime, a Section Leader, John L., from Cahill's Column, came up to him and ordered him somewhere else. Joe refused, saying he had his orders, and John L. very foolishly got angry and asked him was he too cowardly to go where he wanted him to go. Joe sent for me; he was very angry and told me what happened. I went along and found John L. and told him off a bit. I, however, passed it off as John L. seemed to be a voluble, heedless type. He happened to have another police carbine and started to tell me how and when he got it, when he saw I had one too. I think all this preyed on Joe's mind probably. He was very morose on the way home. He tripped over a wire in the moonlight on the way from the Laune and fell into a ditch. I also stepped on a rotten branch and went knee deep into mud. At Coose Lake we were dead beat. We slept on the roadside. Bill Taylor woke the two of us up. The others had scattered and we forced ourselves to continue on home. I have a letter still which he wrote

me while in Belfast Jail. Those Taylors were fearless men. Joe, Bill (still alive) and Jim, "The Captain", were of different families, all distantly related. Jim, "The Captain", was a fearless, sound-headed man. He married about 1918 but lived in a hut in the wood, many times raided by the R.I.C. before they left the Barracks. I think it was he saved my life in the Glencar ambush as he was a dead, quick shot and used to shooting all kinds of game. He died of a neglected appendix during the Truce. He held my hand when he was dying in the Hospital in Killarney and said, "Bertie, what did I ever do out of the way that I should be stretched like this?" I always discouraged loose talk and never discussed the details of this ambush or other operations with any of my men, knowing how things get whispered around and how this and that for a story might get to the wrong ears and do harm. I have never known whether or not the Tans had information that we had left Glencar and that we planned to ambush them on the Killorglin-Milltown road. The scouting by the Killorglin scouts caused the whole catastrophe and the O.C's dependence on them led me to comment very bitterly on the abortive business as a whole.

The same column of Tans, etc., was changed by McCaughey to a Cycling Column and went occasionally to Tralee. They were afterwards trapped on the return journey between Castlemaine and Milltown. It was a very near thing. Steve Rae (afterwards sentenced to death) of the Hotel Boolteens, Keel, was an active I.O. and scout for Paddy Cahill. He, who was sent by Cahill with a despatch, was seen passing through Castlemaine after the patrol went to Tralee, and at Castlemaine on the return one of the Tans,

Foley, who was from Inch, got a tip in Castlemaine to look out on the road home. They stopped outside Castlemaine as they expected the ambush at Kilderry between Milltown and Killorglin and almost decided to go along the railway track but the ambush came off unexpectedly quite near to Castlemaine. They were not in extended order as expected and the attacking I.R.A. were too extended. Result, several escaped, McCaughey and five others were killed. I gave the loan of Joe's gun, a repeating shotgun, to Dan Mulvihill, and it was with this gun the R.I.C. man, Cooney, was shot. It was Cooney, previously wounded in the Glencar ambush, who pulled Joe out of his house the morning he was killed. When Cooney was dying, I was told that he said to the priest who attended him, Father O'Sullivan, "Tell the Glencar lads that it wasn't I shot Joe Taylor". We weren't in the Castlemaine ambush as it was an operation that had to be planned hurriedly and it was well carried out. Tom Connor was again in charge.

Jerry Miles was badly wounded and sent across the Laune at Dungeel ford and sent up to us in Glencar. We arranged to take him to Boheshill to Jerry Foley's shop, Section Commander, R.I.P. Here he spent a week or so attended by a nurse from Valentia, Nurse Casey, who happened to be in the district. For safety he was sent to John Coffey's house at Cloon Lake several miles further in the mountains. He was nursed there by Nurse O'Brien from Keel and lived until 1949.

Operations in Glenbeigh.

This was our nearest enemy post, about ten miles across the mountain. I mentioned getting an order to burn Wynn's Castle from Paddy Cahill, Brigade O.C. This was before Cahill left Tralee but I can't remember was it before July, 1920, or not. There was some trouble in that Company over the fact that Frank Grady, O.C., sentenced for drilling towards the beginning of 1918, I think, having to give bail on orders from G.H.Q. This order was given on the expectation of trouble starting over conscription, but it was misinterpreted locally and there was a dispute in the Company. I took about forty from Glencar to burn the Castle. The Barracks was close by and we had to cover it off pretty well while carrying out the order. After sprinkling twelve tins of petrol over the floors it refused to light and at dawn I was faced with a problem. It was damp, old, and much of it stone work. Fortunately, I noticed a lot of shrub nearby and sent the men to collect and fill up one room with it. I had to send men into the village then for paraffin to set it on fire. It succeeded and the R.I.C. did not move out of the Barracks. Military were to come there the following day and Cahill was very insistent that I burn it that night as his intelligence reports were good. The military then occupied the R.I.C. Barracks.

I took about twenty to Glenbeigh after that to ambush a patrol of R.I.C. and military which passed near the Castle fairly often. Michael Murphy, temporary O.C., met us with a Section and we took up positions and waited

for hours but no patrol turned up.

Occasionally military left Glenbeigh by train for Tralee with a machine gun. Cahill sent a young scout, O'Connor, to get particulars and sent us word to meet him at Dooks. About twenty of us from all three Sections left Glencar, travelled by night, and met him near Dooks Station. This was about April 1921. I had a guide with me who knew the place. Cahill's men, with Tom Connor and others, crossed by boat from Keel and walked along the shore to Dooks Station, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Glenbeigh Station. Frank Grady was there with a Section, I think. It was planned to take them by surprise at the Station and drive on in the train to Killorglin for further operations. Hidden around the Station we waited until they arrived from Barracks, but before they all had entered the Station a premature shot was fired by someone in the Station. Some of them escaped with badly wanted ammunition. A machine gun and some rifles were captured. Cahill was very put out about our position and the danger of being cut off, as nearly happened previous to that at Lispole. I afterwards brought a Section across from Glencar to snipe the Glenbeigh Barracks.

It was after this we met Price from G.H.Q. at Rae's in Keel and the possibility of ambushing a party who used to go to Rossbeigh occupied my mind when the Truce came.

The night before the Truce we were ordered to attack Killorglin Barracks. I took a big Section down near Killorglin and met Tom Connor with a Section. Brigade

O.C. Rice was there. It was that night I met Jack Cronin, R.I.P., Ballymacelligott, with whom I had much experience afterwards in 1922-1923. Jerry Sullivan, Kenmare, an engineer, was there ready with a mine to blow up the Barracks. We waited there a long time while scouts went into the town several times. The scouting didn't seem to be very dependable then either. Finally, J.J. Rice apparently decided that the Barracks were on the alert and expected an attack and were prepared for it and called it off. I think still the R.I.C. intelligence that night was again better than ours. Young Shanahan was killed the same night in an attack by "Free" Murphy on Castleisland Barracks.

I had a long talk with Paddy Cahill a few years before he died and I questioned him over the meeting at Camp attended by Liam Lynch, Divisional O.C. I refreshed his memory first about the incident I already referred to (see previous pages). He smiled and passed it off, then he got serious and I knew he wanted to convey the truth to me. The gist of what he told me was: He was all along the head centre of the I.R.B. either in Kerry or part of it. The policy followed by Lynch, acting no doubt on G.H.Q. orders, was to take Brigades out of head centres' control. He acquiesced to this apparently, as I'm sure all along he was simply Stack's understudy and was guided by him. At that stage the I.R.B. governing body (in U.S.A. probably) had decided to negotiate on something less than the Republic. But Cahill did not accept the Treaty and held his Column intact at Keel in 1922-1923.

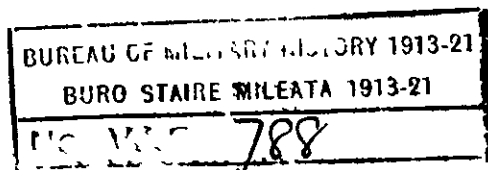
There was a move made immediately after the Truce then which seems an anti-climax to this. J.J. Rice, Brigade O.C. Kerry 11, under whom we then were, swore in all the Glencar Company into the I.R.B. and apparently had been appointed a head centre in his Brigade Area. The explanation mooted at the time was, I think, a vague idea that if anything less than the Republic was accepted in London the I.R.B. would be still alive to continue towards the complete realization of the Republic. There is much in this I cannot piece together and, furthermore, I don't exactly worry about it.

SIGNED:

Seán (Bertie) Scully
(Seán (Bertie) Scully)

WITNESSED:

C. Saurin LIEUT. COLONEL.
(C. Saurin)

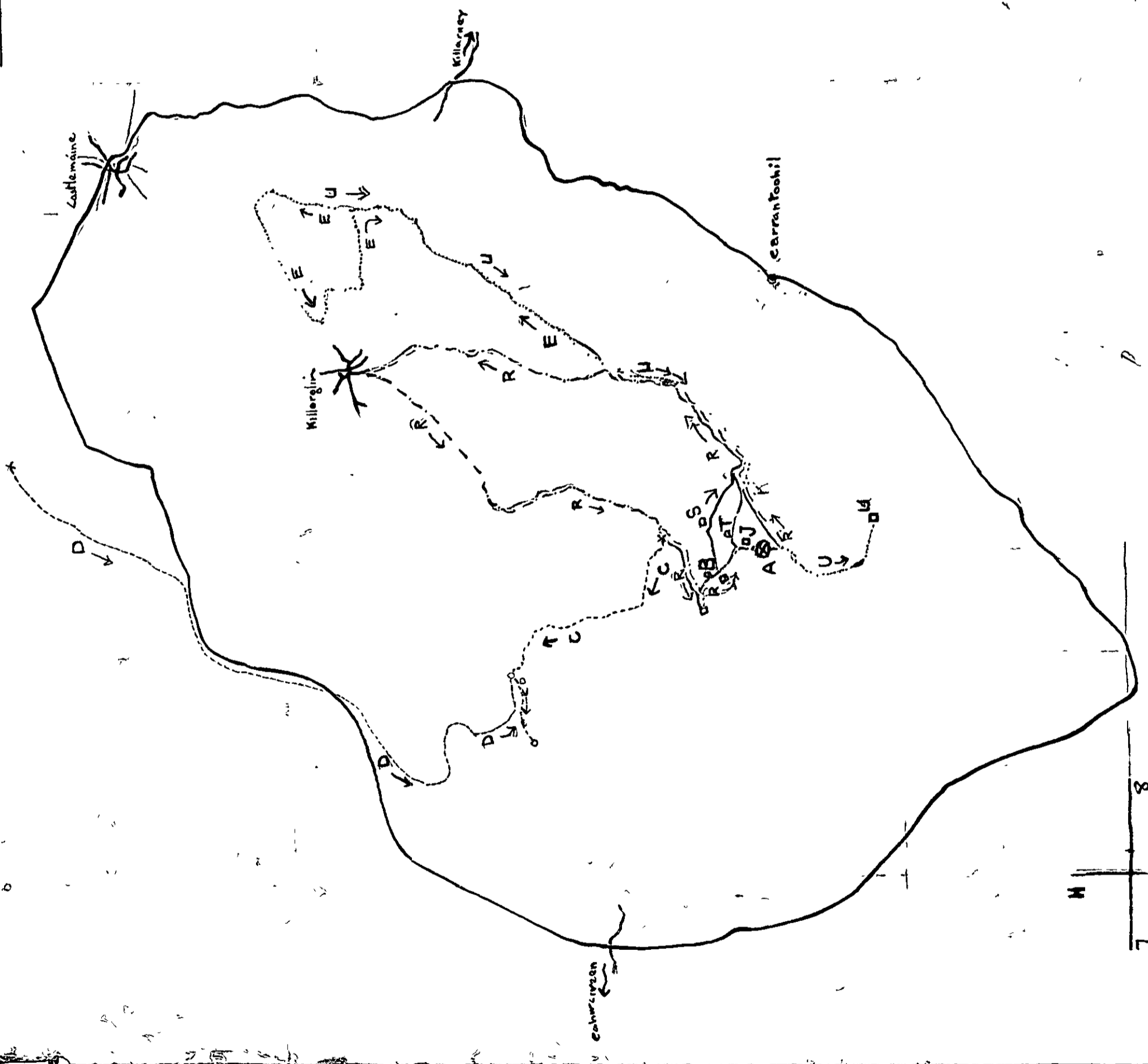


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11



OVERLAY WITH
STATEMENT S. 2048
by Sean Scully, N.T., Dun Muire,
Glanbeigh, County Kerry.

O.S. Sheet 20 Scale 1/2 inch to 1 mile

Area of 6th Battalion, Kerry II Brigade
Detailed by Sean Scully, N.T., Dun Muire,
Glanbeigh, County Kerry.

A Ambush in Glencor July 1920 (page 17 in
Sean Scully's statement) & Bill Taylor's house

B Location of huts in wood

C Route of Battalion Column (section) to
Glenbeigh Station

D Route of Cahills Column from hut at
Keel to meet C at Dooks Station

E Route of Battalion Column to & from
Position in attempt to ambush Millarglin Tans

J Scene of shooting of Joe Taylor

R Tans' route from & back to Millarglin

S Sean Scully's house

T Joe Taylor's house

U Jerry Myles' route & location while recceing

M

7

8

P